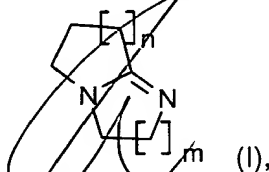


We claim:

1. A process for preparing β -alkoxynitriles by reacting α,β -unsaturated nitriles with monohydric, dihydric or trihydric alcohols in the presence of basic catalysts at from -20 to +200°C, which comprises using a diazabicycloalkene catalyst of the formula I

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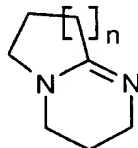
where from 1 to 4 hydrogen atoms may be independently replaced by the radicals R^1 to R^4 , in which case R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 are each C_{1-20} -alkyl, C_{6-20} -aryl or C_{7-20} -arylalkyl, and

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~~n and m are each an integer from 1 to 6.~~

2. A process as claimed in claim ⁶1, wherein the catalyst used ^{in the first step} is a diazabicycloalkene of the formula Ia

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(Ia),

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^{on the diazabicycloalkene nucleus} where from 1 to 4 hydrogen atoms may be independently replaced by the radicals R^1 to R^4 , in which case R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 are each C_{1-20} -alkyl, C_{6-20} -aryl or C_{7-20} -arylalkyl, and

n is an integer from 1 to 3.

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3. A process as claimed in claim ⁶1, wherein the catalyst used ^{in the first step} is 1,5-diazabicyclo[4.3.0]non-5-ene (DBN), 1,5-diazabicyclo[4.4.0]dec-5-ene (DBD) or 1,8-diazabicyclo[5.4.0]undec-7-ene (DBU).

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4. A process as claimed in claim ⁶1, wherein the catalyst ^{in the first step} is used in an amount of from 0.05 to 5% by weight, based on the alcohol.

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5. A process as claimed in claim ⁶1, wherein the reaction ^{in the first step} is carried out at from 25 to 100°C.

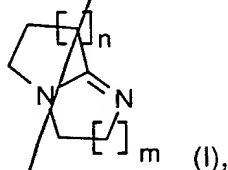
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5 6. A process for preparing γ -alkoxyamines by

a) reaction of α,β -unsaturated nitriles with monohydric, dihydric or trihydric alcohols in the presence of basic catalysts at from -20 to $+200^\circ\text{C}$ to form β -alkoxynitriles, and

b) subsequent hydrogenation of the β -alkoxynitriles in the presence of a hydrogenation catalyst,

10 which comprises using in the first step a diazabicycloalkene catalyst of the formula I as set forth in claim 1



20 where from 1 to 4 hydrogen atoms may be independently replaced by the radicals R^1 to R^4 , in which case R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 are each C_{1-20} -alkyl, C_{6-20} -aryl or C_{7-20} -arylalkyl, and

25 n and m are each an integer from 1 to 6, and effecting the hydrogenation in the second step in the presence of a hydrogenation catalyst and of the catalyst of the formula I.

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